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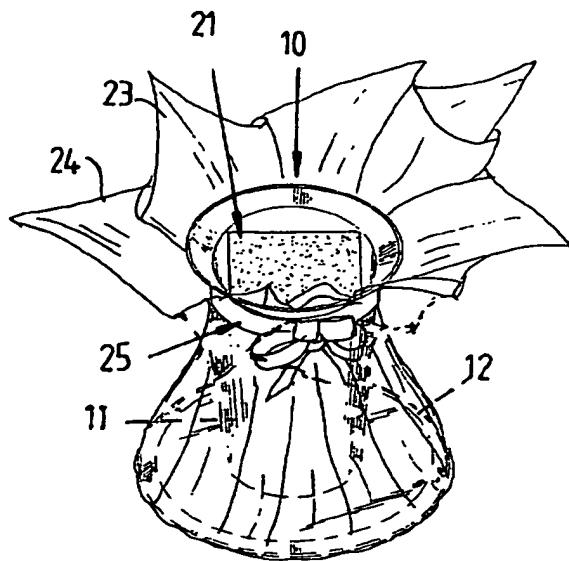
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(57) Abstract: A flower, floral arrangement or growing plant container assembly (10) comprises a container (11) and a tray (12). The container (11) has an open upper end and a closed lower end so as to contain water. The tray (12) is substantially larger than the container (11) and includes a recess to receive the lower end of the container (11) for locating the container (11) substantially centrally of the tray (12). The container (11) has a waist to serve as a locating means for a tie means (25) for attaching sheet wrapping (23, 24) about the container assembly (10) to form a packaged container assembly.

## FLOWER CONTAINER

### Technical Field

This invention relates to a flower, floral arrangement, or growing plant container assembly typically but not exclusively for use by florists.

### 5 Background Art

Existing containers for flowers and floral arrangements are usually very unstable when being transported by courier vans and in customer's cars. Further, their shape reduces the ability to use tall flower placements which are required to create elegant arrangements that appear to be of 10 greater value to the public. If tall flower placements are used, the top heaviness of the floral arrangement often causes the containers to tip over, resulting in damaged and broken flowers often requiring returns to florist for replacement and lost custom due to complaints.

Adding water to the existing containers invariably results in overflows, 15 causing water damage to vehicles and furniture in offices, homes and hospitals. To avoid this problem, the consumer is discouraged from watering the arrangement, thus reducing the life span of cut flowers. Some containers scratch furniture and other containers, such as the cardboard box, often becomes moist, increasing their instability and therefore cannot 20 be use for prearrangements. Although customers prefer to receive floral arrangements, florists avoid sending them because of the above problems.

### Summary of the Invention

The present invention aims to overcome or alleviate one or more of the above disadvantages by providing an improved container assembly and 25 packaged container assembly for flowers, floral arrangements or growing plants. Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following description.

The present invention thus provides in one aspect a flower, floral arrangement or growing plant container assembly, said container assembly 30 comprising a container and a supporting tray therefore, said container having an open upper end and a closed lower end so as to contain water, said tray being substantially larger than said lower end of said container and including means for locating said container substantially centrally of said tray.

The term "flower, floral arrangement or growing plant" includes any form of flower arrangement including flower bunches or bouquets and any growing plant. Flower arrangements and flowers may be inserted directly into the container and preferably into foam supporting blocks therein. Growing plants however are usually provided in a separate growing pot or enclosure which is placed into the container of the container assembly which acts in the nature of a saucer which contains water for the growing plant, the pot or enclosure being at least partially immersed in the water in the container.

Preferably, the container is of circular cross-section but may be of other cross sectional forms. The container suitably includes a first lower side wall portion and a second upper side wall portion which extends outwardly from the lower side wall portion. At least the second upper side wall portion is preferably of frustoconical configuration. The first lower side wall portion is preferably also of frustoconical configuration extending upwardly and outwardly from the closed lower end of the container at an angle of inclination less than the angle of inclination of the second upper side wall portion.

The join line between the upper and lower side wall portions of the container defines a waist which may suitably serve as a locating means for tie means for attaching sheet wrapping about the container assembly. The sheet wrapping and tie means may also serve to maintain the tray in position relative to the container.

The locating means of the tray may be complementary to lower portion of the container. In one form the locating means comprises a recess for receiving the lower end of the container. Alternatively, the tray may include a raised land. In the latter configuration, the container may include a skirt which locates about the raised land.

The tray typically is of circular form in plan however the tray may be of other configurations such as square or multi-sided. The outer periphery of the tray may be provided with a downwardly or upwardly extending flange which may be angled outwardly.

In a further aspect, the present invention provides a packaged container assembly for flowers, floral arrangements or growing plants, said container

assembly comprising a container and a supporting tray therefore, said container having an open upper end and a closed lower end so as to contain water, said tray being substantially larger than said lower end of said container and including means for locating said container substantially centrally of said tray, and at least one packaging sheet wrapped around said tray and said container and secured to said container by tie means around said container.

Preferably, and as stated above the container includes a waist for locating the tie means for the packaging sheet. Pairs of packaging sheets which are suitably of a square configuration but which may be of other configurations may be provided being arranged, when in a square or rectangular configuration, diagonally relative to each other and wrapped or folded upwardly about the tray and container to be secured by the tie means. The tie means may comprise a ribbon, cord or any other form of tying member.

Locating means may be provided adjacent to the waist to assist in locating and retaining the tie means adjacent the waist. The locating means may comprise an annular rib spaced from the waist which may define with the waist a locating groove for the tie means. Alternatively, the locating means may comprise an annular groove at or adjacent the waste for receiving the tie means. In a further configuration, the locating means may comprise discrete projections arranged at circumferentially spaced apart positions adjacent the waist.

#### **Brief Description of the Drawings**

Reference will now be made to the accompanying drawings which illustrate preferred embodiments of the invention and in which:

Fig. 1 is a side elevation view of a container assembly for flowers or floral arrangements;

Figs. 2 and 3 are exploded perspective views of the components of the container assembly from above and below;

Fig. 4 illustrated the container assembly placed on a pair of packaging or wrapping sheets prior to wrapping;

Fig. 5 illustrates the packaged or wrapped container assembly;

Fig. 6 illustrates in perspective view a modified form of container for a container assembly according to a further embodiment of the invention; and

5 Fig. 7 illustrates in part sectional view a container assembly using the modified container of Fig. 6 and wrapped in packaging or wrapping sheets.

#### **Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment**

Referring firstly to Figs. 1 to 3, there is illustrated a container assembly 10 according to an embodiment of the invention which is in two parts 10 comprising a container 11 and a base or tray 12 which supports the container 11. The container 11 is of a generally cup shaped configuration and of circular cross section and has a lower frustoconical outwardly inclined side wall 13 which extends upwardly from the container base and an upper frustoconical side wall 14 extending upwardly and outwardly at a greater 15 inclination from the wall 13 to define at their line of intersection a circumferentially extending join line or waist 15.

The tray 12 is also of circular cross-section and includes a central circular recess 16 to receive the lower end of the container 11. Preferably, the lower end of the container 11 is a push fit in the recess 16 so that the 20 container 11 and tray 16 are held together at least loosely when engaged with each other or are located relative to each other by that engagement. The outer periphery of the tray 12 also may include an outwardly and downwardly inclined skirt 17 which may seat in use on a planar supporting surface.

The lower end of the container 11 may also include an annular skirt 18 25 (see Fig. 3) extending downwardly from the container lower end or base 19 and coextensive with the wall 13. The base 19 of the container 12 can also be provided with an upwardly stepped or raised central platform or support 20 upon which a block 21 of foam material (shown in dotted outline in Fig. 1) can be placed to support flowers in the container 11. The block 21 is suitably of a 30 size to engage the inner wall of the container 11 to be thereby wedged in use firmly in the container 11 when seated on the centrally platform or support 20. Where the container 11 is used for growing plants, plants in pots typically

plastic pots or having their roots in a ball or sod of soil wrapped or enclosed in plastics film may be located within the container 11 for example in the position of the foam block 21 shown in dotted outline, the block 21 of course not being used in this case. The plant pot or ball or sod of soil may be seated on

5 the platform 20 and water placed in the container 11 so that the plant pot or ball or sod of soil is immersed or partially immersed in the water.

For forming a packaged for wrapped container assembly 10, the assembled container 11 and tray 12 as in Fig. 1 are placed centrally on a pair of square or rectangular plastic or paper sheets 23 and 24 as shown in Fig. 4, 10 the sheets 23 and 24 being arranged diagonally relative to each other. The sheets 23 and 24 can then be wrapped or folded upwardly and around the tray 12 and container 11 as indicated by the arrows shown in Fig. 4 and secured with a ribbon, cord or other form of tie 25 tied around the sheets 23 and 24 and container 11, the ribbon or tie 25 being located by the join line or waist 15 15 as shown in Fig. 5. The container assembly 10 can be wrapped in coloured plastic sheets for gift giving or display therefore creating a functional and stylish container for arranged flowers. Tying of the sheets 23 and 24 about the container 11 by the ribbon or tie 25 also serves to maintain the tray 12 in engagement with the container 11 and form a stable wrapped or 20 packaged container assembly.

In a further configuration, the tray 12 can be inverted such that the land 26 normally on the lower side of the tray 12 which defines the recess 16 is on the upper side of the tray 12 and the skirt 18 on the lower end of the container 11 is sized so that it can locate about the land 26 to position the 25 container 11 centrally of the tray 12. In this configuration the skirt 17 of the tray 12 is upwardly and outwardly inclined so as to be in the configuration of a saucer and serves to trap water.

Referring now to Figs. 6 there is illustrated a further embodiment of container 11' which is similar to the container 11 and in which like 30 components have been given like numerals. In this instance, the container 11' includes an annular rib 27 which is formed on or as part of the wall 13 of the container 11' and which extends circumferentially. The rib 27 is located

adjacent to but is spaced from the waist 15 of the container 11' to define a locating groove 28 for a ribbon or tie 25.

In use and as shown in Fig. 7, the wrapping sheets 23 and 24 can be applied to the container 11' assembled with a tray 12 in the manner described 5 with reference to Figs. 4 and 5 and the ribbon or tie 25 is then looped around the container 11' and wrapping sheets 23 and 24 which are folded up against the side of the container 11'. The ribbon or tie 25 is positioned above the rib 27 and adjacent the groove 28 such as to locate therein when tightened about the sheets 23 and 24 and container 11'. The ribbon or tie 25 is thus 10 positively located by the rib 27 which not only ensures that the wrapping sheets 23 and 24 are held against the side wall of the container 11' but also provides positive support to the tray 12 so that it remains in position relative to the container 11'.

The containers 11 or 11' and tray 12 are suitably formed of durable 15 lightweight plastics to minimize packaging space and weight thereby reducing the cost of transport. The tray 12 is of a suitable size to provide stable support for the container 11 or 11' and typically is about 1.5 to 2.5 times the diameter of the base of the container 11 or 11'.

The containers assemblies 10 may be in different sizes and usually three 20 different sizes are provided for different size flower arrangements. The result is a functional, stable floral container with the ability to utilise taller flowers, thus adding value. Further the tapering configuration of the container 11 or 11' is such that they are stackable one within the other whilst the trays 12 being relative thin are also easily stackable therefore making for cost 25 effective transport.

Whilst a single rib 27 as an option is shown for positively locating the 30 ribbon or tie 25, a pair of spaced ribs 27 may be provided which defined a groove therebetween for receiving and locating the tie 25. Alternatively the locating means may be other annular locating means such as an annular groove formed in the side wall 13 of the container 11 or 11'. The locating means in yet an alternative arrangement may be radial projections formed on

or in the side wall and arranged at spaced circumferential positions around the wall 13.

The container assembly of the invention is particularly suited for flowers and floral arrangements including bunches and bouquets, it may also 5 be in the nature of a jardinière for growing plants.

Whilst the above has been given by way of illustrative embodiment of the invention, all such variations and modifications thereto as would be apparent to persons skilled in the art are deemed to fall within the broad scope and ambit of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

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**Claims:**

1. A flower, floral arrangement or growing plant container assembly, said container assembly comprising a container and a supporting tray therefore,  
5 said container having an open upper end and a closed lower end so as to contain water, said tray being substantially larger than said lower end of said container and including means for locating said container substantially centrally of said tray.
- 10 2. A container assembly according to claim 1 wherein said container is of circular cross-section and includes a first lower portion and a second upper portion which extends outwardly from said lower portion to define a waist to serve as a locating means for tie means for attaching sheet wrapping about the container assembly.
- 15 3. A container assembly according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said locating means of the tray comprises a recess for receiving the lower end of the container.
- 20 4. A container assembly according to claim 2 or claim 3 and including further locating means for said tie means adjacent said waist.
- 25 5. A container assembly according to claim 4 wherein said further locating means comprises a groove adjacent said waste.
6. A container assembly according to claim 4 wherein said further locating means comprises an annular rib or enlargement in on of said lower side wall of said container adjacent said waist.
- 30 7. A container assembly according to claim 1 wherein said container includes a platform or support raised above said lower end of said container for supporting a foam flower supporting block.

8. A packaged container assembly for flowers, floral arrangements or growing plants, said container assembly comprising a container and a supporting tray, said container having an open upper end and a closed lower end so as to contain water, said tray being substantially larger than said lower end of said container and including means for locating said container substantially centrally of said tray, and at least one packaging sheet wrapped around said tray and said container and secured to said container by tie means around said container.

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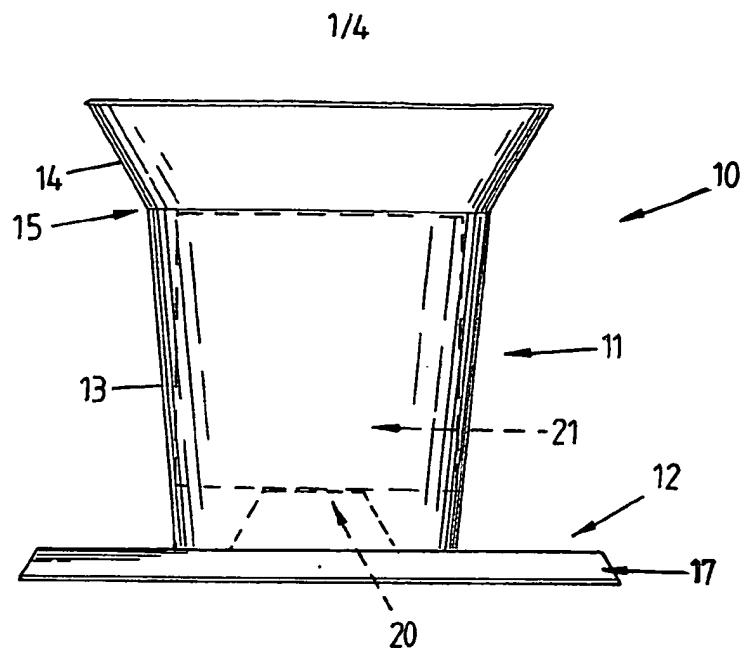
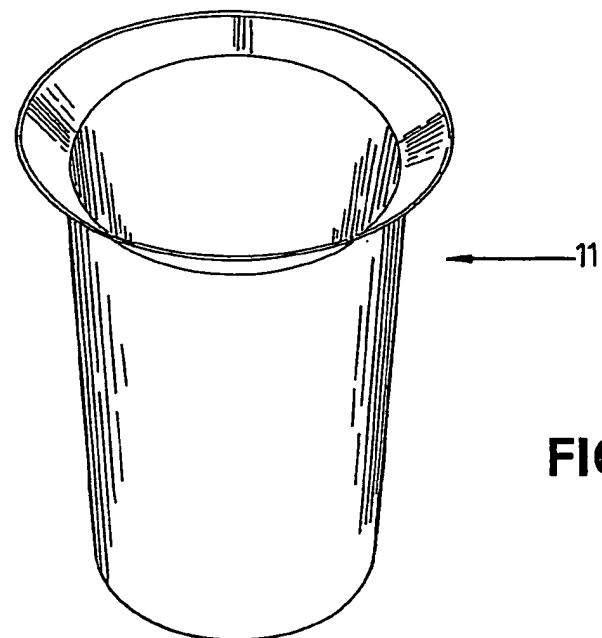
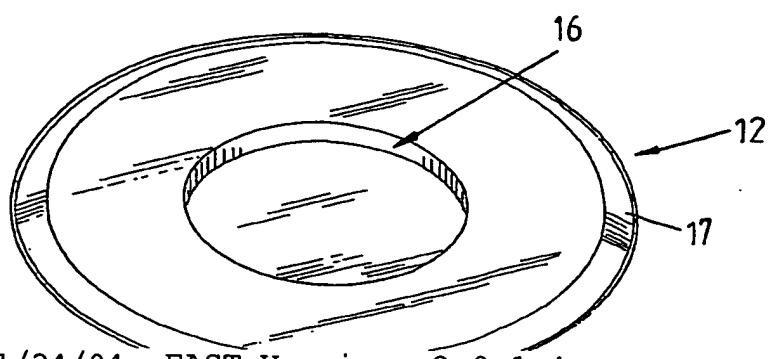
9. A container assembly according to claim 8 wherein said container includes a waist, said waist locating said tie means.

10. A container assembly according to claim 8 wherein said container includes an annular rib at or adjacent said waist for locating said tie means.

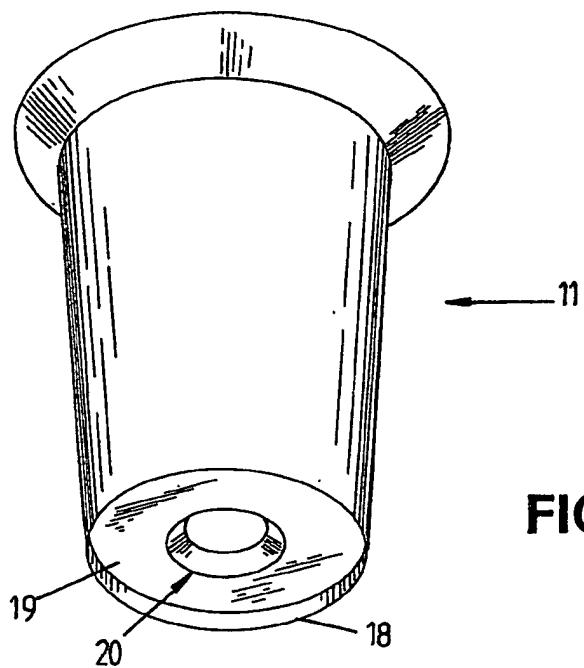
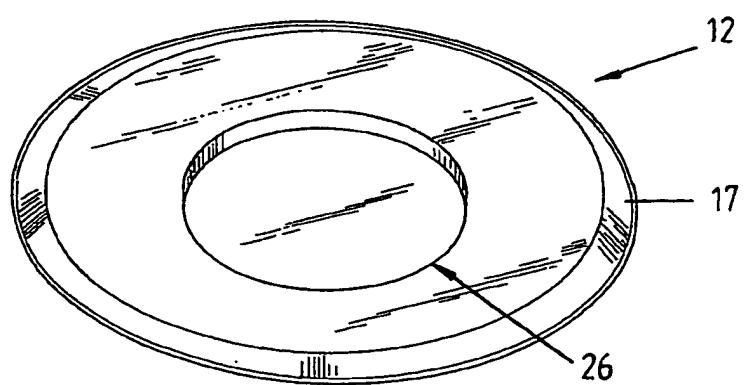
12. A container assembly according to claim 8 wherein said lower end of said container includes a raised platform or support for supporting a foam supporting.

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**FIG. 1****FIG. 2**

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**FIG. 3**

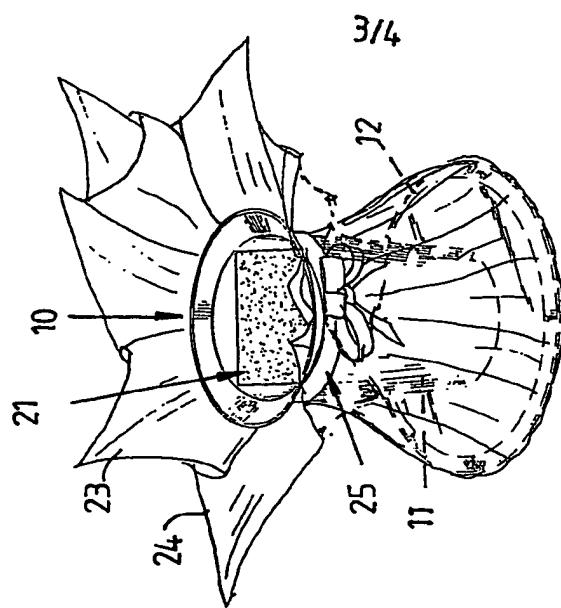


FIG. 5

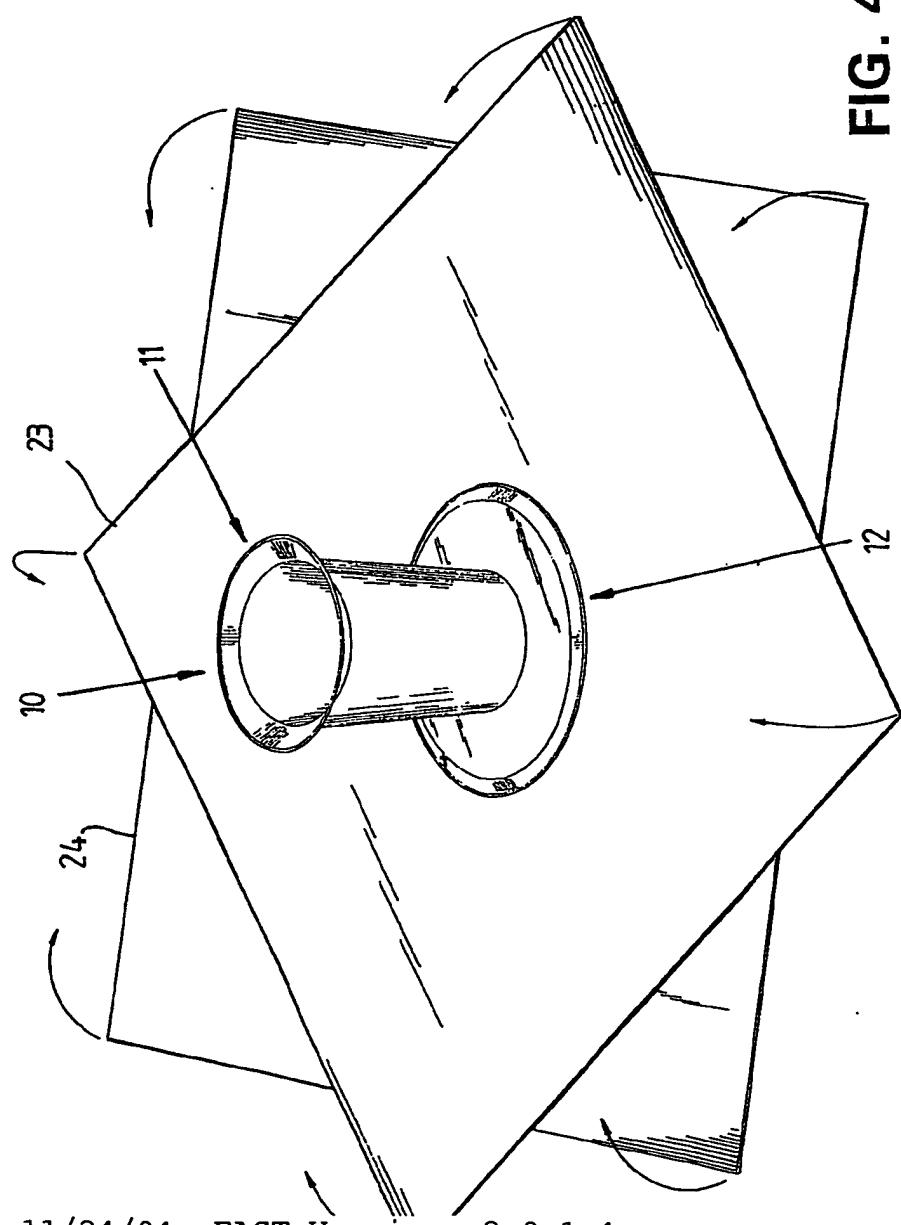
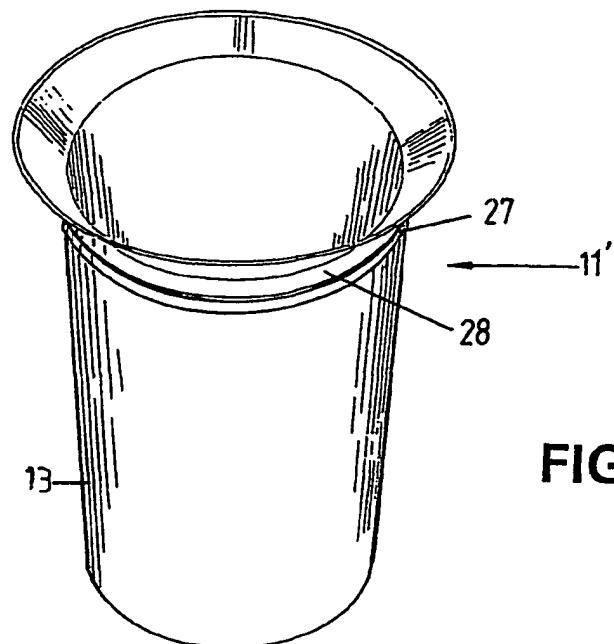
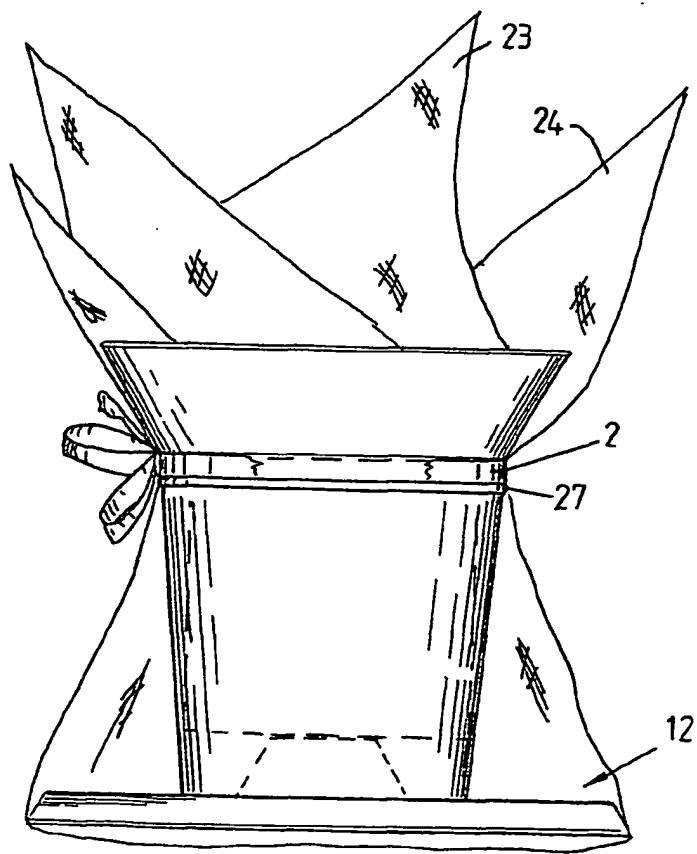


FIG. 4

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**FIG. 6****FIG. 7**

**INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT**

International application No.  
**PCT/AU02/01299**

<b>A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER</b>																						
Int. Cl. <sup>7</sup> : A47G 7/06, 7/08; A01G 9/02, 9/04; B65D 85/52																						
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC																						
<b>B. FIELDS SEARCHED</b>																						
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)																						
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Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) DWPI: Keywords: (FLOWER OR FLORAL) AND (POT OR VASE OR CONTAINER) AND (TRAY AND PLATE)																						
<b>C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT</b>																						
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.																				
P, X, Y	US 6357591 B (GARCIA et al) 19 March 2002 Column 7 lines 5 to 24, column 10 lines 1 to 7, claims 1 & 25 and figures 8 to 20	1-12																				
X, Y	US 6267241 B (GARCIA et al) 31 July 2001 Column 7 lines 1 to 20, column 10 lines 1 to 7, claims 1, 13 & 21 and figures 8 to 20	1-12																				
X, Y	US 6036014 A (GARCIA et al) 14 March 2000 Column 6 line 61 to column 7 line 12, column 9 lines 58 to 65, claims 1, 6 & 11 and figures 8 to 20	1-12																				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex																						
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Date of the actual completion of the international search 7 November 2002	Date of mailing of the international search report 14 NOV 2002																					
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU <b>AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE</b> PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized officer <b>LIONEL BOPAGE</b> Telephone No : (02) 6283 2153																					

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No. PCT/AU02/01299
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C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X, Y	US 5836447 A (GARCIA et al) 17 November 1998 Column 6 line 61 to column 7 line 12, column 9 lines 59 to 65, claims 1, 14 & 19 and figures 8 to 20	1-12
X, Y	US 6240675 B (ALCAZAR et al) 5 June 2001 Column 4 line 61 to column 12 line 42, claims 1 to 25 and figures 3 to 6 & 12	1-12
X, Y	US 3962503 A (CRAWFORD) 8 June 1976 Whole document, in particular, figures 1, 4 & 7	1-12
Y	US 5481826 A (DICKINSON et al) 9 January 1996 Whole document, in particular, figures 1 to 4	1-12
Y	WO 96/13146 A (KRUSE) 9 May 1996 Whole document, in particular, figures 1 to 4	1-12
Y	US 4047329 A (HOLT) 13 September 1977 Whole document, in particular, figures 1 to 6	1-12
	Note: Disclosure in any one of the last three documents when combined with the disclosure of any one of the rest of the documents make the application defined in the claims obvious.	

**INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT**

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/AU02/01299

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Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member					
WO	9613146	AU	36049/95	DK	1241/94		
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